

## FEBRUARY EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

### AUTAUGA CAMPUS MR. CORNELIUS WILLIAMS-FENDERSON



### MT. MEIGS CAMPUS MR. LEON ALLEN



### VACCA CAMPUS MS. TRACI PIKE



## ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH SERVICES

*March 2022 Newsletter*

### FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear DYS Employees,

I am grateful that we have finally made it to the point in this pandemic where we can safely make face coverings optional for our students and staff. As long as conditions continue to improve across the state, and we do not have conditions that go beyond our ability to isolate youth in a dorm, we will continue to allow this precaution to be optional. Please check with your campus leadership if you have any questions and we will continue to monitor this situation and consult with our Health Authorities.

My thanks to each of you who chose to complete a recent survey that will be part of our planning efforts for the next 3 years. We received valuable comments from hundreds of individuals within and beyond our department. Our effort to strategically plan is an attempt to be more responsive, transparent, effective, and efficient.

We are pleased to begin to welcome back family visitation and volunteers as we enter the month of March. We have resumed having intakes twice a week to alleviate the list of youth who have been waiting for DYS services. As we and the courts resume more normal operations we anticipate a steady increase in admissions.

Each campus should have a process in place to ensure every DYS employee gets a copy of the monthly newsletter if they do not have a computer. I hope you will find the information in these newsletters both interesting (learn something you did not know about the department and/or programs); and valuable to you. For example, we have shared information about what is involved in being promoted to a Youth Services Senior Aide and what you needed to do. I understand that some of this information has not reached the YSA staff or they may have been misinformed. Please ask your supervisor or DYS HR Office if you ever have questions that could directly impact or benefit you.

For example, we are still collecting nominations for incentive bonuses. Nominations can come from anyone who is not eligible to receive this quarterly bonus. Your campus leadership and Employee Council Reps should have more information and nomination forms.

Finally, at the recent DYS planning meeting, one of our goals was to work to improve DYS leadership by improving communication and how we connect with one another. I want to share a quote from our assigned readings with each of you, whether you are a formal or informal leader in your area. Our ability to lead is directly associated with our Emotional Intelligence; which is the ability to positively influence others by connecting with them emotionally. To the extent we can all do a little better at this, we will improve our communication issues both interpersonally and organizationally.

"The primal task of leadership is emotional. People don't leave their feelings at home when they go out the door." - Daniel Goleman, Primal Leadership

- Steven Lafreniere

## DYS Holds Strategic Planning Session

The Alabama Department of Youth Services held a strategic planning session from Wednesday, February 23rd through Friday, February 25th. The goals of the planning session were to review and revise the current DYS Mission, Vision, and Values, identify the agency's strategic priorities for the next three years, and discuss the skills needed to be an effective leader. Dr. Mark Nelson, from the University of Alabama, led the strategic planning session. Dr. Nelson has been a faculty member in the Department of Communication Studies since 1991. Dr. Nelson is the Dean of the College of Communication and Information Sciences and provides consulting services for numerous organizations and government agencies.

On Wednesday, the DYS team reviewed the mission and vision and discussed the meaning of leadership. On Thursday, the DYS team discussed the importance of active listening as a key part of leadership. The team also reviewed the agency's values and identified key priorities of focus for the agency for the next three years. On Friday, the team members completed an individual leadership self assessment. The assessment was to identify both the strengths and weaknesses of different leadership styles. During the planning session, the DYS team was also fortunate to have Judge Zachary Collins speak to the group. Judge Collins is a family and juvenile court judge who shared his personal story of overcoming challenges. Judge Collins was inspirational and offered the staff encouragement.



**Judge Zachary Collins**



**Judge Zachary Collins and  
Mr. Steve Lafreniere**



**Dr. Mark Nelson**





## PbS Youth and Staff Scholarship Award Applications DUE APRIL 1, 2022

In 2022, PbS is expanding its staff and youth scholarship awards thanks to generous donations made to the PbS Education and Employment Foundation. The foundation was started in 2019 as we recognized the need to provide financial support for young people in participating facilities to further their educations. In addition to supporting young people, the scholarship also benefits some of the hardworking facility and program staff pursuing post-secondary education. **More scholarship funding is available in 2022, and we will continue to provide awards in amounts of up to \$2,000 to staff.** Past recipients and applicants are welcome to apply.

This year also marks the launch of the PbS J. Russell “Russ” Jennings Scholarship for young people. This is only possible because of the generosity of Coach Russ, as well as the willingness of the Annie E. Casey Foundation to match his contribution. **Youth scholarship awardees will receive \$15,000 to cover tuition, books and related costs from the start to finish of a two-year academic or vocational program or certification.** As part of the new approach, the awardees will be mentored by a young person who received PbS scholarship support while in a facility himself and who hopes to offer the support, guidance and connection to resources he wished he’d had.

To apply for a staff or youth scholarship award, **applications must include an essay, letter(s) of recommendation and documentation of acceptance into the program.** In addition, youth applicants must demonstrate a commitment to completing the program and exemplify Russ Jennings’ kindness, humor and belief in setting high goals and doing their very best to achieve them.

Applications must be submitted by **Friday, April 1, 2022.** The selected recipients will be announced in the spring. For more information about the application process and eligibility, visit the PbS website: <https://urldefense.com/v3/https://pbstandards.org/awards/scholarships/;!!l47Zg8fJQnY!LkS91bSuf->



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### Scholarship

The PbS Scholarship was created in 2016 to encourage and support post-secondary education for young people and staff at PbS facilities. We know education is key for creating opportunities and closing the gap on educational equity. Most youths who are, or have been entangled in the juvenile justice system face tremendous barriers to advancing their education because of their system involvement. For those who are accepted and make it to the point where the remaining barrier is funding, the PbS Scholarship gives them the final boost they need.

Apply for the 2022 awards now through Friday, April 1.

2022 Youth Application

2022 Staff Application

